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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 000793

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MLS  
PACOM FOR FPA HUSO

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [TH](#)

SUBJECT: THAILAND: ACTION PLAN PROPOSAL

REF: A. 05 BANGKOK 7030

1B. LAMBERT-HIGGINS EMAILS

Classified By: Ambassador Ralph L. Boyce. Reason 1.4 (a and d)

11. (C) Summary. Thailand seeks to conclude an Action Plan with the United States to enhance bilateral links. The Action Plan is strongly endorsed by Prime Minister Thaksin. MFA confirms that the Action Plan document would not be released to the public. The draft Action Plan basically outlines items we are already doing with Thailand and may have some utility in helping us promote key U.S. objectives. Post suggests we work on an agreed text. Post seeks guidance from Washington. End Summary.

FOLLOW UP FROM THE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE

12. (C) During the November 7-8, 2005 U.S.-Thailand Strategic Dialogue, Thailand submitted a draft document outlining a Plan of Action between Thailand and the United States aimed at strengthening the bilateral relationship. That document is six pages long and is basically a list of ongoing programs ranging from cooperation in military exercises and the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) to fighting Avian Influenza. The Action Plan concept is supported strongly by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Thaksin views it as an item he and the President agreed to explore during their meeting in Washington in September. Recently, Thaksin has concluded Action Plans with a number of countries including Sweden and France and is negotiating an Action Plan with China.

13. (C) In December, Post sent suggested tracked changes to the Department and sought guidance on how to proceed with the Action Plan. In January, the Department asked post to seek clarification on how the RTG seeks to use the Action Plan.

AN IN-HOUSE DOCUMENT WITH A SIGNING CEREMONY

14. (C) In a February 8 meeting with the DCM, MFA DG for North American and South Pacific Affairs Nongnuth Phetcharatana clarified how the Thai envision using the Action Plan and how it would be publicized. She suggested that the Action Plan would help the MFA and other agencies win support within the Thai bureaucracy for greater cooperation with the United States. Given the nature of Thai Ministries, rarely does a decision maker in a particular agency have a clear understanding of how his or her joint program with the United States fits into the overall bilateral relationship. MFA and the PM's office see the Action Plan as a way to show how individual programs are part of a greater whole. In so doing, Nongnuth hopes the Action Plan could help win interagency endorsement of future initiatives with the United States. Furthermore, a general description of the Action Plan aimed at the Thai public could be useful to proponents of the bilateral relationship to explain the wide range of benefits that linkages with the United States afford Thailand.

15. (C) The DCM told Nongnuth that there is some concern within the USG that elements of the Action Plan might be used by critics of the U.S. -- or the Thai Government, for that matter -- if we were to fall short of certain goals. Nongnuth thought this unlikely since the Action Plan itself would be an internal document used simply as a reference tool. She used the Thai-Sweden Action Plan, concluded on January 23, as an example. Although not classified, the details of that agreement are used internally and are not shared with the public or other countries.

THE SWEDISH EXAMPLE

16. (C) In the case of Sweden, Thailand negotiated an agreed text outlining various programs and aspects of the relationship. They concluded that Action Plan by issuing a joint statement signed by the Foreign Ministers of Thailand and Sweden that simply stated the commitment by the two countries to enhance their relationship. Nongnuth provided a

copy of that joint statement which has been faxed to EAP/MLS.

In response to the DCM's question about dealing with the media and our reluctance to share all details of the Action Plan with the public, Nongnuth suggested that the two Governments could conclude a joint press statement outlining how we view the Action Plan -- highlighting the wide-ranging aspects of our relationship -- and limit our discussion of specifics as we wish. She made it clear that, in her view, concluding an Action Plan would have no downsides and instead be useful in breaking down some of the firewalls separating Thai Ministries.

COMMENT: POST SUPPORTS

17. (C) Comment. Prime Minister Thaksin looks at Action Plans with key countries as one of his major contributions to Thai foreign policy. He seems to envision these plans as a road map to assist decision makers within the Thai bureaucracy. The draft document from MFA contains little that we are not already doing and might even be useful to us to press the Thai on some of our key objectives such as stopping human trafficking, fighting Avian Influenza, improving maritime security and building peace keeping capabilities throughout the region. We see little risk that the document could be used against us and believe modalities could be worked out to ensure smooth implementation outside the media spotlight. Post seeks guidance from Washington on whether to proceed with the Action Plan.

BOYCE